



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

# THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 1, 1879

VOL. VIII

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 24, 1914

No. 4

## A PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL CLASSICAL ALLIANCE

The following is the outline of a letter which I am sending (in French, English, and Italian) to a comparatively large number of men, in Germany and other countries, who, as I happen to know, are kindly disposed to instruction in the classical languages<sup>1</sup>. I most respectfully ask those who receive the letter to express to me their personal opinion in the matter as soon as convenient, and eventually to make any suggestions that may occur to them.

HEIDELBERG.

G. UHLIG.

The opposition to classical instruction, the ultimate purpose of which is the complete elimination of humanistic training for the youth of today, is confined not simply to one or two countries, but is raging in almost all civilized lands. This opposition has been carried on with especial vigor during the last decades in Germany and Austria. It is therefore wholly reasonable that a petition be sent out from these two countries to all friends of humanistic training, of any nationality whatsoever, asking them to form an alliance for the protection and furthering of instruction in classical subjects.

The Deutscher Gymnasialverein, established in 1890, now has about 3300 members, among whom there are men from all the higher professional classes, including many Austrians. The present Chairman of the Verein hereby takes the liberty of submitting to all interested a plan by which the desired alliance could be most effectively and expeditiously brought about.

In his opinion, we should have a polylingual international correspondence, in which annual reports of only a few pages could be made concerning the status of the cause for which we are fighting in the various countries. One of the three leading languages, French, English or German, could be used in making these reports; Latin and Italian might also be included.

<sup>1</sup>For a copy of the very interesting communication herewith presented we are indebted to President Butler, of Columbia University, who sent it to me early in the summer with the suggestion that a translation of the letter be prepared for THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY. Dr. Butler's high opinion of the value of classical studies was printed in 7.65. The translation was prepared by Dr. Allan W. Porterfield, of the Department of Germanic Languages at Barnard College.

From the reference to a coming address of Professor Shorey in May last it is clear that the letter was issued in the first third of the present year. The current situation in Europe makes the letter even more interesting than it was when written and circulated; the action proposed has become even more necessary. All lovers of the Classics may be one in the hope that the present conditions, so unfavorable both to Bildung and to Kultur, may soon terminate, and that that Dr. Uhlig's suggestions may then bear fruit.

C. K.

We hope, however, to receive expressions of opinion not simply from Austria, Germany, France, and England, but also from Spain, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Rumania, Russia, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, and North America.

For we know full well, from newspapers, letters, and personal interviews, that instruction in the Classics is meeting with great opposition in those countries as well as in Germany and Austria, France and England. The reports sent to us in this way would not only satisfy our legitimate curiosity; they could also be of great practical value owing to the large amount of good advice that our colleagues would find in them. If they could be made as brief as has been above indicated, and if only a few hundred subscribers could be secured, the little annual could be furnished for less than a mark. Carl Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung in Heidelberg, which already publishes Das Humanistische Gymnasium, the official organ of the Deutscher Gymnasialverein, will soon be in a position to assume the responsibility of bringing out the paper we have in mind.

Every now and then someone says that humanistic studies are in a condition of irresistible retrogression leading on to complete disappearance from the curricula. The individual who makes this remark does not know, or has forgotten, the history of higher instruction, and the peculiar energy that attaches to the study of antiquity and forms an integral part of it. This life-giving force has manifested itself in an especially creditable way in those particular places where study of the Classics seemed to be destined to an eventual overthrow. Ernst Curtius once made the following apposite comparison between classical instruction and the Christian religion:

Both have this in common, that they occasionally seem to lose their hold on the popular mind and are looked upon as done for and obsolete. They are like the rivers of Greece, which, coming down from the mountain-sides, lose themselves for a while in the recesses of the earth and flow along hidden under the hard, sterile surface, only to break forth at another point and give rise to a luxurious vegetation.

Just so are we, in the midst of all this antihumanistic agitation in Germany, witnessing a mighty revival of interest in the literature and the culture of ancient Greece and Rome. The fact that in those old Hellenic cities, and on the Tiber, ideas were once expressed and

theories formulated that give eternal value to the intellectual life of mankind, and which cannot be reckoned among the things that time begets and time destroys—this fact is just now being realized in ever widening circles. If we turn our attention to other countries we see two tendencies that most heartily support our conviction. That powerful land beyond the sea, whose relation to antiquity is not nearly so intimate as is the case with the majority of European countries, and whose citizens no one can accuse of blindly adopting the traditions of the years that are gone—that country shows an ever increasing appreciation of the value of humanistic training. In Europe, however, where some people have imagined that Greek and Latin should be completely eliminated from our Schools, and that we should thereby constitute the vanguard of culture and progress, we see what has happened: the unsuccessful experiment has resulted in a grievous disappointment to the progressives, who struck out on the wrong road, and whose fatal march is now being accompanied by the command for a return to the original course.

But these facts which seem to controvert any temporary pessimism should not lead Humanists into believing that all is well, and that they can from now on sit with folded hands and let the future take care of itself. Culture needs at *all* times that invaluable element, that otherwise unobtainable basis, which comes from intimate acquaintance with, and real appreciation of, classical languages and literatures as taught by those who know. If this classical element is at any time or in any country eliminated, or even retarded, civilization receives in consequence a shock which all scholars and trainers of scholars should try to prevent.

One of the means of preventing this retardation of culture would be the banding together of Humanists in various countries. A step in this direction has already been taken by the Union of the Friends of the Humanistic Gymnasium in Vienna. On May 22, 1912, the Union was addressed by the distinguished mathematician and physicist, Henri Poincaré, who, unfortunately, was called away two months later from his life so full of work and so abounding in good results. M. Poincaré spoke on Humanism and the Natural Sciences. In most illuminating fashion he gave expression to his conviction that the study of ancient languages and literatures—aside from its disciplinary value—is full of possibilities of increasing one's linguistic efficiency and giving one a hold on the ideal things of life that is otherwise difficult to obtain. On February 22, 1913, the distinguished Roman archaeologist, Giacomo Boni, addressed the Union on the excavations on the Palatine in the preceding year. For the coming session in May, Paul Shorey of Chicago, the American Exchange Professor now in Berlin, has promised an address on National Culture and Classical Training. These are, to a certain degree, the first steps toward the founding of an international alliance such as we have in mind. Let us take the other steps!

If we succeed in our undertaking, this year or next, an additional point will have been gained: we live in an era of strong antagonism between the leading nations of the world—an antagonism which seems to threaten the very peace of the world. In such times it is exceedingly important that the cultured classes of all nations unite in all common causes that are good, exchange their opinions, come to an agreement on points of interest, and thereby strengthen the bonds of the mutual friendship that ought to exist. And it seems to us that an alliance among all who are kindly disposed to humanistic training in our institutions of learning would be an important step in this direction; it would bring us closer and closer to that international understanding and appreciation for which all cultured men long and toward which all cultured men strive.

### THE MODERN PSYCHOLOGY AND FORMAL DISCIPLINE

In a book recently published in Boston, a prominent clergyman remarks that we have to thank agnosticism for having killed off dogmatism, and then, without redipping his pen, he finds reason to blame agnosticism for having given birth to a new form of dogmatism, no less virulent and unreasonable than the old, but hostile to religion, putting religious beliefs to scientific tests which, if applied to the ordinary activities of life, could result only in the paralysis of most efforts for social and individual improvement. With a competent estimate of the use and limitations of scientific methods of arriving at the truth, the learned divine foresees and predicts a marked revival of religious interest and activities with a practical creed purified of the crudities and incongruities that formerly brought religion into discredit.

What agnosticism did for dogmatism, the modern psychology has done for the formal discipline of the old type, which regarded the mind as a sort of mental muscle to be developed by sustaining heavy weights and hardships, its activities resulting in stored-up energy known as general power, which at the will of the happy possessor could be utilized for turning out a sermon in time of peace or a strategem in time of war. It is this type of formal discipline to which Professor Schmidt savagely alludes in his article in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7.162-163, when he says:

If the main purpose in teaching Latin is to be formal mental discipline, if its educational value is to be measured according as it is distasteful and strains the mind to overcome meaningless difficulties, the traditional method unquestionably serves the purpose very well. But if the purpose of teaching Latin is to have the pupil learn the language, the present search for a new method is the best evidence that the old does not accomplish this.

Less than fifteen years ago there was begun at Columbia University a series of experiments or tests consisting of efforts to select words containing certain letters, to estimate the area of geometrical figures with